

# BEST MUNICIPAL ADVANCEMENT



311

Questions like “Where do I register to vote?” and “What day should I put my trash out?” used to be weighty philosophical dilemmas, mulled over at great length by bureaucrats behind Plexiglas windows. Determining the address of the closest hurricane shelter entailed a Faustian journey into the bowels of voicemail networks. Learning which phone number to call in a police nonemergency involved a magnifying glass, a high-wattage light bulb, and an hours-long commitment to the phone book’s blue pages. But then, in September 2005, Miami-Dade County officially launched its 311 call center. Now dial just three numbers, and the answering party — one of 86 who man the phones at an 11,000-square-foot facility — will surprise you with a cheery “How can I provide you with excellent service?” The center expects to receive an estimated 2.5 million calls in its first year of operation, and a quick review of the yammering to date seems to indicate that Miami-Dade residents’ priorities are clean, safe neighborhoods. The Top 5 service requests/complaints?

1. Stray/dog at large
2. Junk and trash overgrowth
3. Dead animal pickup
4. Commercial vehicle parked illegally
5. Abandoned property

So: Stop sign down? Rabid dog in the driveway? The answer is three numbers away. No hold music, no voicemail, and helpful people. Your first question may very well be “Am I in Miami?”